VPTs in Bihar

†*428. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of inhabited villages in Bihar on the basis of population in the year 2001 and the number of villages where the landline service has been made available alongwith the total number of telephones provided there; and

(b) the details of Government proposal to make the telephone services available in remaining villages which are without landline telephones?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) There are 39,032 inhabited villages in Bihar as per 2001 census. 8,387 villages have landline services. 30,088 villages have been provided telecommunication services on wireless media. This excludes villages having less than 100 population, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. In the rural areas of Bihar, 3,69,651 connections have been provided on landline with total connections in rural areas being 4,58,366.

(b) There are 104 SDCAs in Bihar. The Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund has entered into agreements with M/s Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Reliance and Tata Group to provide 'Telephone on demand' with support from USO Fund in 56 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in Bihar by January, 2006. It is expected that about 1.2 million additional connections will be provided in Bihar by March 2006 by BSNL. It is estimated that up to half of these will be in rural areas.

Mobile towers in Bulandshahr

†*429. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
DR. CHHATTRAPAL SINGH LODHA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) the number of applications seeking mobile connection from B.S.N.L. lying pending all over the country;

(b) the number of mobile towers proposed by B.S.N.L. in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh and by when these would be set up; and

(c) the number of places in Bulandshahr district where proposal for setting up of mobile towers or telecom centres are under consideration?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) As a policy Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), has not been maintaining waiting list; however, in some of the States where waiting list was authorized to be maintained, the total number of applications pending with BSNL for prepaid mobile connections as on 31.7.2005 is 13,22,172.

(b) and (c) BSNL is in the process of expanding its mobile services to ten additional towns apart from expansion of existing towns where coverage exists. Accordingly, in Bulandshahr telecom district seven of the thirty towers planned are already operational and the remaining towers are expected to be available progressively from October 2005 and completed during the current financial year.

Talent from rural areas in sports

†*430. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to lack of sufficient means of sports in the rural areas, the country is deprived of emerging talents;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have formulated any plan to tap the talents from the rural areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) 'Sports' is a State subject under the Constitution. Promotion of Sports at State level is mainly the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.